# SoftTrak Sidings

Here's a new way to make sidings. We start with turnouts at both ends for each of two sidings. At the bottom is a SoftTrak Route that will be used in the process. Create the one-piece route using the Draw / Splines / Draw SoftTrak Route with Easements. Click the left mouse button at any location in your drawing, move the mouse right and slightly up, then double-click the left mouse button to end the draw. Depending on your spiral easement length setting, you will see a curve similar to the one shown.

To start making your sidings, use the Parallel Tool on a track segment, dragging the copy above and below the original track to prepare each siding.
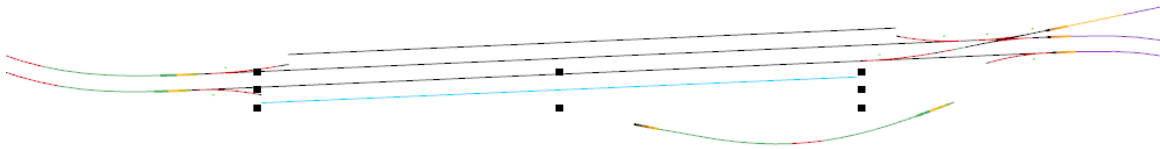
Select a siding and use Slice Into Segments (Ctrl+F5) and choose three segments.
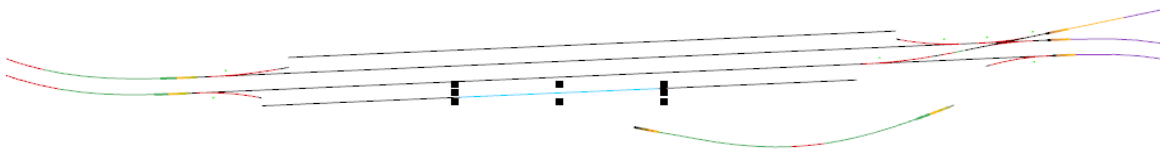
Delete the two pieces at each end, leaving the center piece highlighted above.

Repeat the Slice Into Segments operation for the other siding.

Using the Select Tool (not the Parallel Tool used previously), point to the SoftTrack Route about a third of the way from the right – in the middle of the area that's colored green in this example. Don't point to the gold-colored tip, which is used to flex the SoftTrak. Hold down the Ctrl key, then press and hold the Left Mouse Button to drag away a copy of the Route, so its tip aligns to the turnout's routing leg. Release the mouse button while still holding Ctrl to complete the copy operation.

Drag the left tip into alignment with the tangent track that defines the siding's centerline. The original Route is set to a Fixed Radius of 22" for this N-scale layout, and uses easements. The single Route object defines the curve, easement and tangent track needed to complete the connection.
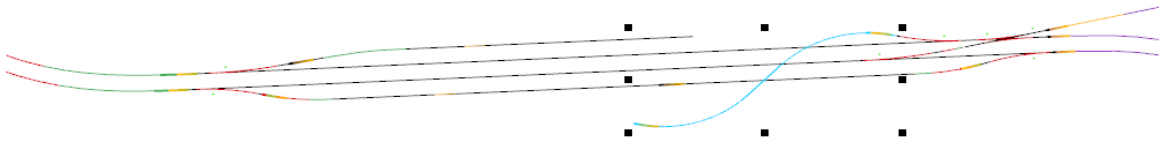
Similarly, drag a copy of the original Route to the lower-left end, complete the second connection, then proceed with the upper-left area.
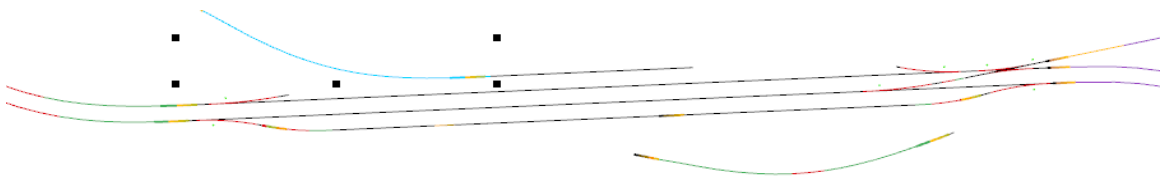
...and drag its tip to complete the top-left siding connection.

Finally, drag the right end of the original Route to the open end of the upper-right turnout. The results makes one smile, but it does show the flexibility of SoftTrak Routes.

After the final connection is made, you have efficiently designed two sidings. The curves at each end adjust themselves to the angles of the turnouts relative to the siding track for optimal use of the curve and easement. If you aren't using easements, the SoftTrak will have the largest radius possible for the geometry involved, up to the maximum you specify.
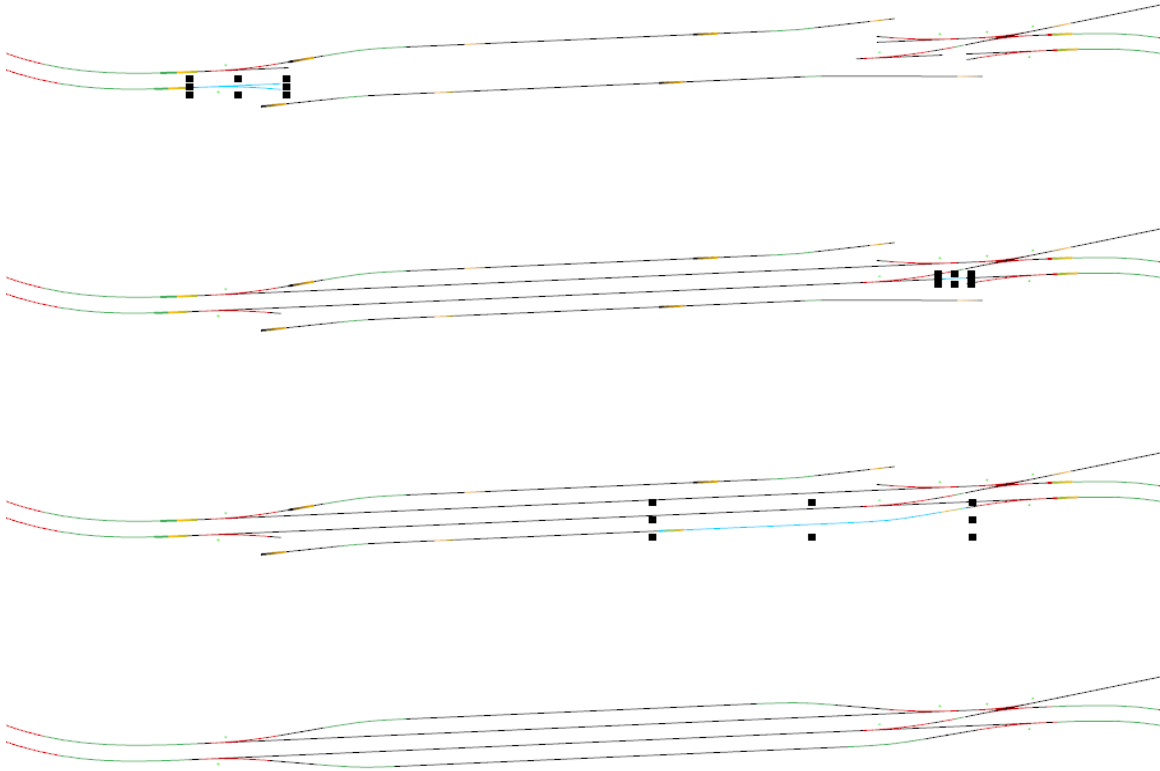
Modifying an Existing Design

Did you ever want to make changes, but felt like a lot of effort was involved? Let's decide to change all the medium turnouts to large turnouts. The next series of images shows the simple process.

There has never been a track planning tool as useful as SoftTrak. This is just one example – what designs will it inspire you to try?